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From: [Roland James](#) **To:** backtalk@motherjones.com **Cc:** ...**Sent:** May 24, 2007
Subject: Gl Wmg/offsets Cap&Trade, CCA, carbon tax...Mother Jones May-June 07

"Paying for My Hot Air" (May-June p74) is in keeping with the Big AWOL (American Way of Life), paying-indulgences approach to Global Warming. It is seductive. Governor Arnold has reversed his negative poll numbers and won reelection with a message that says "you can have it all": a big energy and resource intensive life and still solve Global Warming by just trading or offsetting one's emissions--and energy conservation is for "girlie men."

I agree with Leonardo DiCaprio that it isn't personal--that it is instituting the proper policies, but it really helps to walk the talk-like Gandhi: No More Private Jets for Me, DiCaprio Tells Cannes
http://www.truthout.org/issues_06/052107EA.shtml: As his new environmental disaster documentary screened at Cannes, Leonardo DiCaprio defended his international lifestyle and lashed out at critics of Al Gore, who last year premiered his own film on global warming....

You and most of the rest of the media have succumbed to the full-court press by Environmental Defense and others who favor "market" solutions to Global Warming. ED also pushed electricity deregulation in Ca, and just as the Ca legislature caved in on deregulation, Congress seems to have succumbed to pressure for carbon offsets and Cap & Trade: "Cap and trade' gaining favor--Congress taking up business-friendly proposals to reduce global warming" 3/21/07 SF Chronicle by Robert Collier:
'I fall into the cap and trade thing, largely because I don't see a carbon tax ever getting enacted in the United States.' Sen. Dianne Feinstein. Sen. Boxer has said almost the same thing, and they seem fairly representative of Congress.

On April 20, SF KQED Forum had yet another program focusing on carbon offsets and Cap & Trade, including an uncontested comment [just one of many problematic comments] that a carbon tax would be much more difficult to administer than Cap & Trade: actually, the carbon tax is imposed at the point of extraction or importation on a relatively few and then passed through to the ultimate consumer.
In contrast, PBS has provided some balance with a segment on April 11 with Daniel Rosenblum of the Carbon Tax Center on a carbon tax and an offsetting reduction in the payroll tax.

Another dissident minority media voice-- April 16 07 Newsweek, p 96: "Congress is currently considering a variety of proposals that address this issue [Global Climate Crisis]. Most are a smorgasbord of caps, credits and regulations. Instead of imposing a simple carbon tax that would send a clear signal to the markets, Congress wants to create a set of hidden taxes through a "cap and trade" system. The Europeans have adopted a similar system [after it was forced into Kyoto by US before US withdrew and after decades of 'green taxing'], which is **unwieldy and prone to gaming and cheating....**"

In contrast to most US political, media, and environmental leaders, Gro Brundtland, former prime minister of Norway, and other European leaders have implemented carbon taxes and high gasoline and electricity taxes, while lowering taxes on "good things" like work income.**

Like electricity deregulation, offsets and Cap & Trade are set up for market failure. Markets haven't worked well as the primary tool in "public goods", such as health care, k-12 education, electricity, water, and now the global atmospheric commons. Cap-and-trade relies on caps on emitters of green-houses gases [billions of emitters world-wide] and then credits are issued if those caps are exceeded.

This requires regulations and the chaos of setting and monitoring caps and trades: dealmaking and gamesmanship, which are at the heart of US American capitalism. Ironically, a more market-oriented approach is to add the full environmental costs of emissions to the fossil fuel through a carbon tax, which will be passed through to the ultimate consumers.

The market responds to tax or price signals and will be able to shift itself toward conservation, efficiency and renewable solutions without need for caps or a bureaucracy to watch over a cumbersome market of carbon emissions.

This is not popular with politicians or business because it shifts the initial burden to the extractors of the fuels that emit greenhouse gases -- and they are powerful, but not as powerful in the final sense as the consumers of fossil fuel energy: it might appear to US American consumers as an "attack" on the big, energy-intensive US American Way of Life. That is why members of Congress have said that Cap and Trade is the way to go and that a carbon tax is off the table.

Though Cap and Trade may have worked for SOx and NOx, Global Warming is fundamentally different. CO2 is global and cumulative, whereas SOx and NOx are regional and non-cumulative--and some areas have alkaline soil that need a little acid. There were a few hundred SOx and NOx sites, but there are potentially billions of greenhouse gas sites. CO2 is also invisible, tasteless, and odorless, and market trading for it is as susceptible to fraud and manipulation as the electricity market was by Enron. But most importantly, the five billion people in the world who live on less than \$10/day and who are needed to have a solution to Global Warming consider Cap and Trade to be a shell game and eco-imperialism. www.sinkswatch.com

Trading may be one tool but as the only tool it is little more than a shell game, allowing the developed world to shift the burden of making cuts onto the developing world. http://www.truthout.org/issues_06/030807EC.shtml *

Many now agree that Cap and Trade isn't enough to turn this around globally in the 9 years that Jim Hansen and others say we have. What we need most in 2009 is a significant national carbon tax and lowering the payroll tax--and then such a carbon tax globally. How do we get there ?

Below are the state Initiatives I would like to do in as many states as possible prior to 2008 election to change the public discussion, provide "cover" for candidates running in 2008, and enable significant federal action on global warming and the US conflict/war response to oil... ---as we did with the Nuclear Safeguards Initiatives in 6 western states in the 70s.

To change public discussion and to prime federal action in 2009-->

State Initiatives (21 states have statutory Initiative process) that

1) put a large tax (30 cents/kwhr?--like Norway's \$5-6 tax on gasoline years ago) on electricity usage above a baseline amount during the solar window-9 am to 7 pm

(for residential customers taxing AC and electric water heating) and commensurately lowering the state income tax [or state sales tax].

2) sliding scale Sales (2%-20%) and annual Veh Lic Taxes (\$20/yr to \$5000/yr for life of vehicle) for new non-commercial vehicles based on fuel efficiency or majority alternative fuel use (revenue neutral cf. to present--old vehicles stay on present system, reconfigure every yr or two based on changing technology and buying habits....)

There should be no feebate/rebate for any vehicles; what then do you do about the person who decides to live without a car--using a bike and public transit?

The tax system is needed...esp. for price-regulated utilities.

This would lay the groundwork for a significant (to include previously excluded "externalities") federal gasoline and kwhr taxes or carbon tax.

A significant carbon tax [or gas tax & kwhr tax] would both abate need for new coal power plants

and send the market a clear and powerful signal to encourage conservation and efficiency, as well as develop alternative energies.

Unfortunately, effective response to Global Warming and to Blood for Oil is being compromised--if not systematically killed-- by people who should know better. There is timeliness required in response to crisis and such a thing as 'Too Late.' We are missing opportunity for dramatic change and to possibly save cute species like the American Pika, or human civilization--to really put it dramatically.

People clamp onto solutions that are unrealistic. For example, California **Community Choice Aggregation** has been law for 5 years and there haven't been any communities that have taken advantage of the law yet-- probably because the proponents want more renewables, at a lower price, 24/7/365. Not very realistic. Not even close! Additionally, there is already a renewable portfolio standard of 20% in Ca--with a move to increase that to 33%. There is probably a limit at which more solar (available 1000-2500 hrs in 8760 hour year) and wind (disappears w high temps when needed most) can be incorporated into a 24/7/365 electricity grid. That is why solar works best on the customer side of the meter with net metering-- where people can determine their own reliability requirements and there are no transmissions losses.

I appreciated Gore's message to Congress on March 21 in favor of a carbon tax and lowering the payroll tax. However, his emphasis in Inconvenient Truth on the mouse in the room, compact fluorescents (and yours in Plugging the Bulbs, p76), rather than on the elephant in the room, air conditioning, gives the impression that solving Global Warming will be easy. His family's very large carbon footprint is also not helpful; Gandhi lived *satyagraha*; he didn't just use the word.

Roland James Santa Rosa Ca

* Arnold : reduce energy consumption to reduce emissions? [of course not]
4/22/07 Associated Press--'Schwarzenegger heading for MTV's 'Pimp My Ride' To promote biofuel' Sacramento, Ca--Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is headed to MTV to promote Earth Day with an 800-horsepower car that runs on renewable bodies fuel....accelerates from zero to 60 mph in three seconds. The governor said the converted car will be 50% lower than a comparable gas-powered car." [Even if true about 50% reduction, who needs a 400-horsepower car? = to a 8000 humanpower car?]

The "American Way" of Ecology By Herve Kempf, Le Monde, 4/12/07
"... once the Bush parentheses have closed, the United States will, undoubtedly, rejoin the international community in negotiation of the follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol. Still, that does not mean that the richest society on the planet is really ready to change a very wasteful way of life. Witness, for example, its ever-growing energy consumption: according to Platts, McGraw-Hill's division for energy analysis, the United States in the next five years is supposed to install a 37 gigawatt capacity ... of coal-fired electricity plants.

Growing Social Frustration

The message is only **rarely transmitted with clarity by politicians: Al Gore, to cite only one of them, doesn't indicate that a reduction in energy consumption is necessary to reduce emissions and allows people to believe that technological progress will resolve all problems.** No doubt, politicians feel the middle class is all the less ready for these efforts in that it already feels weakened and disadvantaged compared to the richest classes. An example of this

growing social frustration: the television channel CNN presented a report on March 29 entitled "The War against the Middle Class," based on a study by researchers Emmanuel Saez and Thomas Piketty. That study shows that, in 2005, inequalities in the United States reached their highest level since 1928, with the richest one percent earning on average 440 times more than the average salary of the 150 million Americans situated on the lower end of the scale.

Thus, President Bush has not yet lost the climate change battle. He can now claim to maintain his positions by promoting biofuels - which have as a first advantage that they assure the support of Midwest farmers - and energy research. These arguments could make the public believe that its way of life will not be affected. But, up until now, technological advances have not been adequate to prevent an increase in pollution created by the globe's premier economic power. Big companies and political officials will have to convince people that the trend can be inverted. In the absence of which, Washington and Jefferson's heirs will have to resolve to reassess the legendary "American way of life."

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**\*\*GLOBAL CARBON LEVELS SPIRALING--3% RATE IN 2004 VS. 1% IN 1990s--but down in Europe**

By Dan Vergano, USATODAY.com 5/22/07 [also in major papers like SF Chronicle]

Warnings about global warming may not be dire enough, according to a climate study that describes a runaway-train acceleration of industrial carbon dioxide emissions.

Fueled by rapid growth in coal-reliant China, rates of carbon dioxide emission from industrial sources increased from 2000 to 2004 "at a rate that is over three times the rate during the 1990s," says a report released by the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The annual rate of increase for emissions of the main greenhouse gas in 2004 was 3%--triple the 1% rate during the 1990s.

"We have had rapid economic growth powered on traditional carbon-emitting sources," says study author Christopher Field of the Carnegie Institution of Washington's branch in Stanford, Calif.

In February, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicted a 7.2-degree rise in surface temperatures by 2100 if the world pursues growth reliant on fossil fuels, producing more severe droughts, floods and heat waves. The study's real-world carbon dioxide emissions rate exceeds the panel's assumptions.

Carbon dioxide is responsible for about half of the 1-degree increase in average surface temperatures attributable to human activities in the past century, the climate change panel says.

"This should serve as a notice to the global community that renewed and stronger efforts are necessary in this political, economic and scientific milieu," says Robert Andres of the Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center at Oak Ridge (Tenn.) National Laboratory, who was not part of the study.

The results show that the world is burning more coal than ever. "Coal is abundant and cheap but much dirtier than other fossil fuels," Field says.

Carbon dioxide emissions in millions of metric tons-- first number is in 1980, second in 2004:

|                           |        |        |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|
| North America             | 5439   | 6886   |
| Central and South America | 623    | 1041   |
| Europe                    | 4657   | 4653   |
| Eurasia                   | 3027   | 2550   |
| Asia, Australia           | 3556   | 9604   |
| Africa                    | 534    | 986    |
| Middle East               | 494    | 1319   |
| Total                     | 18,333 | 27,043 |

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The movie "Amazing Grace" vibrantly tells the persistent and obsessive quest of William Wilberforce and a few others to end the African slave trade in the British Empire. Wilberforce entered the House of Commons in 1780 and finally was able to get a law in 1807 that abolished the slave trade. The similarities of the arguments against abolition of slavery to the arguments today opposing significant action on GCC and fossil fuel addiction are striking.

Driving a ordinary sized car at 60 mph is the equivalent of having 800-4000 slaves working for you. The U.S. only has 3% of this slave-equivalent energy now, while having 25% of its usage . The development of oil in Africa and the subsequent burning of that oil adding to Global Warming are as at least as great a human rights crisis as the slave trade was, in addition to being a monumental environmental crisis. Yet we get relatively little response in the U.S.--except endless talking, public relations ploys, and inadequate voluntary, market and localism diversions. Can you imagine Wilberforce trying to end the slave trade one community at a time, or with some kind of trading system, or with a voluntary approach?

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The poor of the world get it on both the front end (oil extraction) and the back end (GI Wmg): Oil wealth does little to ease poverty in Africa [and causes conflict]

April 15, 2007 San Francisco Chronicle M-1

The Scramble for Africa's Oil/By John Ghazvinian

Harcourt; 320 p; \$25; Reviewed by Austin Merrill

sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article/cgi?f=/c/a/2007/04/15/RVGHGP4C2S1.DTL

It's no longer a secret that the United States is interested in African oil. With prices for crude staying above \$70 per barrel for all of July and most of August last year, and with the war in Iraq showing no signs of abating, Washington is desperate for another source of black gold to feed our ever-deepening addiction. Yes, Al Gore and the rest of the environmentalists have made Americans think about wind energy and hybrid cars more than ever before, but for now at least, we're the biggest gas guzzlers on the planet.

To feed that need, President Bush has cast a wide net. The White House continues to pursue oil from Alaska, and it is pushing for increased development of alternative energy sources including biofuel and ethanol. But with those options facing numerous hurdles, oil from overseas is still in high demand.

Enter Africa. ... the corruption and the misery behind the continent's oil boom. It was a daunting task, but Ghazvinian is a lucid and often elegant writer, and he manages to transform the chaos that is African oil politics into a fascinating, entertaining and very readable book.

Ghazvinian's first chapter begins the book where it must, in Nigeria. Perhaps recent news about pipeline explosions and militia kidnappings of oil workers has given Americans pause about the wisdom of looking to Nigeria as our oil savior. [Us get 40% of Nigerian oil now. see also Feb 07 National Geographic].....squalid slums of Lagos and ... all seething with anger and poverty.

Ghazvinian ...refers to " 'oilfield trash,' a subculture of fat, sweaty, mostly Anglo-Saxon men I was beginning to see at every stop," he writes. ...--Austin Merrill

The UN's IPCC just concluded that 2/3 of CO2 buildup comes from Europe and US. Africa accounts for less than 3% of global CO2 emissions since 1900, the report noted, yet its 840 million people could suffer enormously from global-warming-induced droughts and floods and have the fewest resources to deal with them....

"The most profound danger to world peace ...the legitimate demands of the world's dispossessed. Of these poor and disenfranchised, the majority live a marginal existence....Global warming, not of their making but originating with the wealthy, will affect their ecologies most. Their situation will be desperate and manifestly unjust...."

100 Nobel Laureates at Nobel Prize Centennial-2001.

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Climatology experts have called the recently announced Western Governors'Cap and Trade' plan anemic,

but it might be "fun":

'Green giant's big carbon footprint' by D Saunders 4/17/07 San Fran Chronicle

"...Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger boasts that he is a world leader in the fight against global warming -- but his advocacy shouldn't keep him from flying in private jets or driving a Hummer. The gas-guzzling governor is on the latest cover (4/16) of Newsweek. The Austrian Oak is now global warming's jolly green giant. Last week at Georgetown University, Schwarzenegger explained how he was making environmentalism more attractive. The problem with enviros, he said, was that people thought they "were no fun" -- "like prohibitionists at a fraternity party."

[Europe has higher happiness levels with 1/3 to 1/2 the per capita energy intensity.]

Plan Arnold is to turn environmentalism from a phenomenon based on guilt to a successful movement "built on passion." Call it You-Can-Have-It-All Environmentalism.....his behavior and his rhetoric send a different signal: conserving energy is for girlie men....

After all, no one really expects stars or rich people to sacrifice. All the glitterati have to do is really believe in global warming, maybe ride in a hybrid to the Oscars -- and then their carbon trails (which are much larger than those of people who take the bus every day) won't stink.

... they applaud when a so-called leader on global warming speaks as if "environmentally muscular" technologies and carbon offsets can manufacture a 25-percent reduction in greenhouse gases by 2020. They have this odd belief that the key to fighting global warming is not by cutting energy use, but by believing in global warming. They embrace wishful thinking -- and call it science.

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"Luxury is the worst form of violence." Juvenal

[USAmerican luxury is built on a platform of oil and coal]

Since the overthrow of Iran's Mossadegh in 1954, there has been a bipartisan group in Washington who have wanted a US presence in the Middle East to secure access to the light crude oil there, including the use of sanctions against the Iraqi people in the 90s and the establishment of permanent military bases. I believe we must move beyond protests and symbolic actions to address the underlying reasons for why there is no real exit plan from the Middle East. There has been a coalition of labor & consumer advocates with the fossil fuel and auto industries to prevent significant action re US addiction to oil and coal. However, Europe has higher levels of life satisfaction with 1/3 to 1/2 the per capita energy intensity of US.

\*Native American "7th generation ... "

\*Mexican filmmaker Alfonso Cuarón (Children of Men): "In contemporary culture, there is a complete disregard for future generations. We have all our economic needs met, and, in the meanwhile, the next generation is taken out of the equation. ...There is no time for caution. There is only time for transformation." 12/24/06 SFChr

\*Along with this [population increase, technology...], we've had a curious change in philosophy.  
We think it's ok not to worry about the long-term consequences of our actions.  
All the information flowing toward us may be one factor that foreshortens our time horizons,  
causing us to focus on the near term and instant gratification. So much so, in fact, that when  
one says, "This will hurt our grandchildren," it's hard to get a response. [Re accelerating effects  
of Global Climate Chaos]...First they came for our grandchildren, then they came for our children,  
and now they're coming for us. This is playing out now." Al Gore in May/June 07 Sierra Mag p51

The economic system is based on the environment, not vice versa.

### **Wendell Berry:**

"The most alarming sign of the state of our society now is that our leaders have the courage to sacrifice the lives of young people in war but have not the courage to tell us that we must be less greedy and wasteful."

Although he has been called the prophet of rural America, his life and thought have meaning for people in cities and suburbs as well as for farmers like himself. He sees the connection between the natural environment and the whole range of human activity. Ultimately his vision is of community in the largest possible sense. Berry sees and proclaims that humankind must learn to live in harmony with nature or perish.

Wendell Berry has written widely, including *The Unsettling of America* (1977) and an essay, *The Failure of War* (1999). In the latter he asks: "How many deaths of other people's children are we willing to accept in order that we may be free, affluent and (supposedly) at peace? To that question I answer: None . . . Don't kill any children for my benefit." His essay, *Thoughts in the Presence of Fear*, relates the events of September 11, 2001 to crucial questions about the global economy, the purpose of education and the necessity for active peacemaking. *Citizenship Papers*, a collection of his essays, 2003.

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There is no one but us.

 There is no one to send,
 nor a clean hand nor a pure heart
on the face of the earth, nor in the earth,

but only us,
a generation comforting ourselves
with the notion that we have come at an awkward time,
that our innocent fathers are all dead
--as if innocence had ever been--
and our children busy and troubled,
and we ourselves unfit, not yet ready,
having each of us chosen wrongly,
made a false start, failed,
yielded to impulse and the tangled comfort of pleasures,
and grown exhausted, unable to seek the thread, weak, and involved.
But there is no one but us.
There never has been.

Annie Dillard

I've been involved in the Global Climate Crisis issue since the 1980s when I was assistant/policy advisor to an Arizona utility regulator and helped stop (or just delay for 20 years?) 2 coal plants, move Az utilities from declining block rates to inclining block and time-of-use rates, and implement a way of regulating utilities that didn't rely primarily on rate of return regulation that has encouraged increased kWhrs sold or increased investment in power plants, but instead split utility system savings between shareholders and customers. Unfortunately, the latter was interrupted by electricity deregulation fever that spread east from California. When I ran for the Arizona Corporation Commission in 2002 on a platform opposed to electricity deregulation and opposed to building more conventional coal power plants, The League of Conservation Voters endorsed my pro-deregulation and pro-conventional coal opponents.